

## Abstract 118

**TITLE:** Ethnic Identify, Gay Identify, Sexual Sensation Seeking and HIV Risk Taking Among Men of Color Who have Sex with Men

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**BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES:** This study identified relationships among ethnic identity, gay identity, sexual sensation seeking, and HIV risk-taking behaviors among MSM of color. The following hypotheses were investigated: 1) MSM of color who report high ethnic identity will report significantly more HIV risk-taking behaviors; 2) MSM of color who report high gay identity will report significantly less HIV risk-taking behaviors; 3) MSM of color who report high sensation seeking will report significantly more HIV risk-taking behaviors.

**METHODS:** Three independent variables of ethnicity identity, gay identity, and sexual sensation seeking were measured by the Multi Group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), the adapted Homosexual Identity Questionnaire (HIQ) and the Sexual Sensation Seeking Scale (SSSS). To control for potential confounding variables, we collected information on age, HIV status, relationship status, and length of residency in the United States, education and ethnic@. The dependent variable of HIV risk-taking behavior was measured by the HIV Risk-taking Behavior Scale (HRBS). A calculation of sample size based on the recommended power of .8 and a moderate effect size of .5 suggests a sample size of 230 participants. The convenience sample (N=302) consisted of men of color who met the inclusion criteria of reporting sexual contact with other men, and are able to read English and/or Spanish, as the questionnaire was available in both languages. Data was collected from subjects recruited in gay bars, gay bathhouses, gay-oriented agencies servicing MSM of color. Subjects were also recruited during the United States Conference on AIDS held in Dallas on November, 1998.

**RESULTS:** The sample (N=302) consisted of 24% African American, 28% Latino, 25% Asians/Pacific Islander, 19% Caucasian, 1% American Indian, and 3% other ethnicity. Based on their limited representation, American Indian subjects (n =3) and subjects who selected the "other" ethnic category (n =10) were excluded from data analysis. Subjects were recruited from four sources: community events/programs (35%), conferences (34%), gay bars (21%) and bathhouses (10%). The sample was highly educated (87% with more than high school education), and predominately non-monogamous (77%). Twenty three percent of the sample reported being HIV positive and 9% did not know their HIV status. Although all men resided in the United States, 29% were not born in the country. Of those born overseas, the majority was Asians/Pacific Islanders (61%) and Latinos (29%). Logistic regression analyses identified sexual sensation seeking as a predictor of unprotected anal sex (OR = 3.82, p = .0000). High sexual sensation seeking MSM are 3.8 times more likely to engage in unprotected anal sex in the previous month. The logistic regression analysis also suggests that not having a defined gay identity was a significant predictor of unprotected anal sex (OR = 3.41, p = .0009). MSM who are not gay identified are 3.4 times more likely to engage in unprotected anal sex than gay identified men. At least one instance of unprotected anal sex in the previous month was reported by 69% of MSM with an undefined gay identity. In contrast, 45% of MSM with a defined gay identity reported participating in unprotected anal sex. The logistic regression analysis confirmed that a monogamous relationship status predicted unprotected anal sex (OR = 2.52, p = .0044). Those MSM who reported being in a monogamous relationship are 2.5 times more likely to engage in unprotected anal sex than their nonmonogamous peers. Because there was some suggestive evidence in the literature that being foreign born could correlate with participation in risky sexual behaviors, we performed a logistic regression analysis on the sample of MSM who were not born in the United States (N = 89). Results suggest a negative correlation between unprotected anal sex and length of residence in the United States. For foreign-born MSM the shorter their stay in the country, the more likely they are to engage in unprotected anal sex (OR = .91, p = .0436).

Logistic regression analysis confirmed that Ethnic Identity was not a significant predictor of unprotected anal sex among the sample. The MSM of color sample reported fairly high ethnic identity mean scores ranging from 3.53 (African Americans), 3.48 (Asian/Pacific Islanders) to 3.33 (Latino). The Caucasian sample score 2.97 out of a 4-point scale.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Sexual sensation seeking, not having a clearly defined gay identity, being monogamous, and length of stay in the country (for those not born in the United States), are significant predictors of participation in HIV risk-taking behaviors among MSM of color. All of these predictors should be incorporated into the design and implementation of HIV prevention programs targeting MSM of color in the United States.

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